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SUBJECT: February 26 MFA Press Briefing: Human Rights Report,  
"Jubilant" Tibet, Wangfujing Self-Immolation Incident

11. Key points at the February 26 MFA press briefing:

-- Responding to a question on the U.S. Department of State Human Rights Report, the MFA spokesman said China "attached great importance" to human rights, had made "constant progress" on human rights and "fully protected religious freedom." China recommended the United States "focus on its own human rights issues," stop acting like a "human rights god" and "stop interfering" in other nations' "internal affairs."

-- The spokesman had "no specific information" on South Korean media reports that Chinese President Hu Jintao had invited North Korean leader Kim Jong-Il to visit China.

-- The Chinese and South Korean Foreign Ministers met on February 24 in Beijing and expressed continued support for the Six-Party Talks.

-- PRC Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi invited Japanese Foreign Minister Nakasone Hirofumi to visit China February 28 to March 1.

-- Tibet "enjoyed a stable situation" and "good social order." Tibetan people were preparing to celebrate the Tibetan New Year, and the Tibetan people were "jubilant and radiant" about the celebration. No agency in Tibet had been instructed to "restrict foreigners' travel in Tibet."

-- The spokesperson had "no specific information" on the February 25 incident in which three people reportedly had set themselves on fire in the Wangfujing area of Beijing.

Department of State Human Rights Report  
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12. At the regularly scheduled February 26 MFA press briefing, MFA spokesperson Ma Zhaoxu answered a question about China's reaction to the annual U.S. Department of State Human Rights Report by saying that China "attaches great importance" to human rights and has worked to "improve and respect" human rights. Over the past three decades, China "has made constant progress" on human rights and "fully protects religious freedom." "Various ethnic groups enjoy great freedom" based on "equality and mutual respect," and China "worked to build a dialogue" on human rights to "build consensus" and "reduce differences." The PRC "firmly opposes" interference in China's internal affairs and recommends the United States "focus on its own human rights issues," stop acting like a "human rights god" and "stop interfering" in other nations "internal affairs."

"Jubilant" Tibet  
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13. In response to a question about the potential for unrest in Tibet, Ma replied that Tibet "enjoys a stable situation" and "good social order." Tibetan people are preparing to celebrate the Tibetan New Year, and "as you can see on television" the Tibetan people are "jubilant and radiant" about the celebration. Ma conveyed to the Tibetan people his "best wishes for their festival"

and, speaking in the Tibetan language, wished the people of Tibet an "auspicious new year."

¶4. While answering a related question about reports that travel agencies were instructed that foreigners could not receive travel permits to enter Tibet, Ma said "to date no agency" in Tibet had "been instructed" to "restrict foreigners' travel in Tibet."

#### Wangfujing Self-Immolation Incident

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¶5. Ma received multiple questions about an incident on February 25 in which three people reportedly set themselves on fire in the Wangfujing area of Beijing. Ma said he had no specific information on the issue, that Beijing Authorities had already issued information and that journalists should refer to the "competent authorities" if they sought additional details.

#### Hu Jintao Invitation to Kim Jong-Il

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¶6. When asked about South Korean media reports that Chinese President Hu Jintao had invited North Korean leader Kim Jong-Il to visit China, Ma answered that the Chinese Communist Party and the Workers Party of Korea enjoyed a "tradition of high-level exchanges." Ma expected this tradition to continue but said he did not have any specific info on this issue.

#### South Korean Foreign Minister Visit to China

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¶7. In response to a question about the content of Chinese Foreign  
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Minister Yang Jiechi's February 24 meeting with South Korean Foreign Minister Yu Myung-hwan, Ma said the two had "exchanged views" on bilateral issues of "common interest" and expressed their continued support for the Six-Party Talks. Both sides remained "committed to safeguard peace and stability in the region."

#### Japanese Foreign Minister to Visit China

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¶8. Ma confirmed that Foreign Minister Yang invited Japanese Foreign Minister Nakasone Hirofumi to visit China from February 28 to March 1 to "exchange views" on bilateral issues and "other international and regional issues of concern." Ma said China "attaches great importance" to Nakasone's first visit to China as Foreign Minister and that it was "important to promote a mutually beneficial strategic relationship."

#### EU-China Summit

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¶9. When asked about press reports that the EU-China summit would be held in May, Ma responded that Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao "agreed to restore" the eleventh EU-China summit when he visited the European Union Headquarters in January. The "specific details," however, "required further diplomatic efforts."

#### Auction of Chinese Relics in France

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¶10. Ma deflected questions on the auction in Paris of Chinese artifacts by saying China had repeatedly stated its position on the issue, referring journalists to a statement by the State Administration of Cultural Heritage, and stating that he had no further information on the issue.

#### U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Visit

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¶11. Ma said he did not have any specific information on the scheduled visit to China of U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for East Asia David Sedney and referred journalists to the Chinese Ministry of National Defense for further information.

